

City of Burien

BURIEN PLANNING COMMISSION
February 25, 2015
7:00 p.m.
Multipurpose Room/Council Chambers
MINUTES

To hear the Planning Commission's full discussion of a specific topic or the complete meeting, the following resources are available:

- Watch the video-stream available on the City website, www.burienwa.gov
- Check out a DVD of the Council Meeting from the Burien Library
- Order a DVD of the meeting from the City Clerk, (206) 241-4647

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jim Clingan called the February 25, 2015, meeting of the Burien Planning Commission to order at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jim Clingan, Butch Henderson, Joey Martinez, Curtis Olsen, Amy Rosenfield, Brooks Stanfield, Douglas Weber

Absent:

Administrative staff present: Chip Davis, Community Development director; David Johanson, senior planner

AGENDA CONFIRMATION

Direction/Action

Motion was made by Vice Chair Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Stanfield, to approve the agenda for the February 25, 2015, meeting. Motion passed 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Direction/Action

Motion was made by Vice Chair Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Henderson, and passed 7-0 to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2015, meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation on Miller Walker Creek Drainage Basin Plan / WRIA 9

Senior planner David Johanson introduced Elissa Ostergaard from King County to speak about Miller and Walker creeks and the Burien nearshore. He said she would explain what the watersheds are and how they relate to salmon recovery. He noted that the information the commissioners will be receiving tonight relates to the critical areas ordinance update they will undertake later in the year.

Ms. Ostergaard said she is part of WRIA 9 – Water Resource Inventory Area 9 – a designation which is a way of defining the 30 or so watersheds throughout the state. For purposes of salmon recovery, WRIA 9 is the Green/Duwamish/Central Puget Sound watershed. She showed the commissioners a map detailing the area within the WRIA 9 designation.

Ms. Ostergaard explained that Chinook salmon were listed as threatened in 1999, so the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) authorized the development of a recovery plan. The WRIA 9 recovery plan was ratified by the 17 jurisdictions within the watershed in 2005, was adopted by NOAA in 2007 and was included in the larger Puget Sound recovery plan for Chinook salmon. It also was included in the action agenda for Puget Sound, which is run by Puget Sound Partnership. All the jurisdictions in WRIA 9, including Burien, have an interlocal agreement with King County being the lead entity in implementing the recovery plan. A group of elected officials and other stakeholders meets quarterly to determine where to spend the \$1.2 million available annually for salmon recovery projects.

One of the policies agreed to by the jurisdictions is that they will consider salmon habitat needs when updating their Critical Areas ordinances.

She noted that one of the strategies is to allocate 40 percent of the annual funding toward the Duwamish transition zone, which is an area limited by industrial development along the river. She said tiny fish require shallow-water mud flats in the intertidal area as places to rest and continue maturing before being flushed into Puget Sound where they may be eaten by larger creatures.

Ms. Ostergaard said another 30 percent of the funding goes to spawning habitat and another 30 percent to rearing habitat. She said the Seahurst Park seawall removal was part of the WRIA 9 habitat project priorities.

She said Burien has predominately nearshore area, and juvenile salmon on the nearshore need natural bluffs without bulkheads, docks or overhanging trees. She explained that juvenile fish from the Green/Duwamish head south along the Puget Sound nearshore habitat, as do juvenile fish from other rivers. The sediment from feeder bluffs is important to replenish the beaches and prevent erosion, and to benefit the benches a little further out in the sound where eel grass grows and forage fish hang out. Forage fish are eaten by Chinook salmon and the salmon, in turn, are eaten by orcas.

Ms. Ostergaard explained that WRIA 9 supports the Miller Walker Stewardship Program, which is run by King County through a technical services agreement with Burien, SeaTac and Normandy Park and an interlocal agreement with the Port of Seattle. Forty percent of Ms. Ostergaard's time is spent as the Miller Walker Basin steward.

She said salmon live in the two creeks throughout the year and many species of fish lay eggs in the gravel creek beds. Before development, forests used to infiltrate runoff and the streams would rise slowly during a rain event. Currently when it rains the water flows off of impervious surfaces and the streams rise at an unnaturally rapid rate.

Ms. Ostergaard said large woody debris creates habitat structure in the creeks, with the water flowing around it, creating channels, pools and shallow areas, hiding places and slow and fast water necessary for the salmon to thrive. She said a healthy creek also needs connected flood plains and a constant source of gravel. Salmon, she added, need very cold water, which the forests provide by shading the water.

The previous stream steward started a program called CSI for Highline (Community Salmon Investigations). Ms. Ostergaard said they had a record turnout of 35 volunteers this past year. Most of them hiked about a mile and a half up the creeks once a week from early October until about Christmas to count and identify all the live adult salmon they saw. If they find dead salmon they cut them open to determine whether the fish had spawned before death. Between 40 and 95 percent Coho salmon die of some sort of pollutant in stormwater runoff from roads within four to eight hours of entering the creek system, but the specific pollutant has yet to be identified. By infiltrating stormwater into the ground, conditions for the salmon can be improved, she said.

Another of her responsibilities is to organize monthly work parties to clear English ivy, English holly and English laurel from forest areas along the creeks. These plants choke out the native plants, which then negatively impacts the health of the creeks. She also advises homeowners who live adjacent to the creeks about managing the native plants on their property.

Stormwater retrofit analysis is a planning resource for Burien, said Ms. Ostergaard. The top 80 sites for stormwater retrofit projects in the 8-square-mile Miller Walker basin have been identified for possible installation of stormwater management facilities on already developed sites to try to manage stormwater onsite. Of those, the top 30 sites were analyzed for feasibility and effectiveness, and then the top four were selected for detailed pre-design reports. Those projects are all in Burien and are eligible for grant funds from the state Department of Ecology; DOE requires a 25 percent local match.

Ms. Ostergaard said she had posted information and maps on the Miller Walker Creek website.

In answering questions from commissioners, Ms. Ostergaard said that Coho salmon are released into the creeks by both the Soos Creek Fish Hatchery and Trout Unlimited. Studies have shown that the development of the cardio-vascular system and brain development in juvenile fish is very adversely affected by hydrocarbons in the water, such as oil and gasoline, and the fish will die with further exposure to those pollutants. She added that Walker Creek has less Coho pre-spawn die off, presumably because there is much less commercial development along Walker Creek and Walker Creek has large wetlands that filter runoff at the headwaters.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chip Davis reported that the City Council will have training in parliamentary procedure on April 20th provided by Ann McFarland of Jurassic Parliament. It will be videotaped for later viewing.

He also noted that the commissioners will begin working on the update of the City's critical areas ordinance with a joint meeting with the City Council on March 23rd. A meeting of the commission chair and vice chair, mayor and deputy mayor, staff and possibly the consultant will be scheduled prior to the joint meeting to establish the ground rules and policies and procedures that will be observed throughout the update study. The goal of the joint meeting, he said, is to develop a common knowledge base and the scope of the critical areas update before the full commission begins its work. The update process should be completed by June.

Mr. Davis said the immediate next thing the commissioners will be working on is the 2015 Comprehensive Plan amendment docket. Amendment applications are due by March 2nd.

ADJOURNMENT

Direction/Action

Vice Chair Martinez moved for adjournment; Commissioner Stanfield seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

APPROVED: March 11, 2015

/s/ Jim Clingan, chair
Planning Commission